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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LJUBLJANA 000761

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SUBJECT: SLOVENIA BALANCES INTERESTS IN KOSOVO/SERBIA

REF: SECSTATE 187642

Classified By: COM Thomas B. Robertson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(C) Summary. Slovenia understands the need to balance a variety of interests, particularly commercial, with the need to keep Serbia focused on ICTY cooperation and other necessary actions that would help ensure its European future, according to the MFA Director for Western Balkan Affairs. He emphasized the importance of finding ways to encourage Serbia forward which might mitigate, if only partially, the expected loss of Kosovo. Given Slovenia's historic support for Kosovar Albanians, it must work hard to maintain a good level of trust with Serbia. Access to the markets of a stable and prosperous Serbia are key to Slovenia's own economic well being. End Summary.

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Ceku: Making the Right Sounds  
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12. (C) Pol/Econ Chief met with MFA Director for Western Balkans Affairs Leon Marc Wednesday, November 23 to discuss reftel points and the recent visits to Slovenia by Serbia and Kosovo officials. In mid November and in rapid succession, the Government of Slovenia (GOS) received visits from Kosovo PM Ceku, Serbia FM Draskovic and UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General in Kosovo (DSRSG) Rucker. Of Ceku's visit, Marc said he made all the right sounds, thanking Slovenia for its police presence, ramping up of military contribution to KFOR and recent investments and other business contacts. He said Ceku was accepting of the delay in the status process, and worried about EU enlargement fatigue. Ceku also met with Prime Minister Jansa and the Minister of Economy, no doubt to discuss further Slovene investment in Kosovo.

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Rucker: Worried About Kosovar Complacency  
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13. (C) During his visit to Ljubljana DSRSG Rucker met with FM Rupel. According to Marc, he thanked Slovenia for its contributions, both security and economic. He also sought Slovenian support in the aftermath of the status resolution when he thought efforts on standards implementation would need to be redoubled and all would need to work to avoid any sort of "soft partition" that might develop with the Serbian community. He worried over the degree of complacency in Kosovo that determining status would solve all outstanding problems. Foreign investment and support for civil society would be crucial elements in Kosovo's future success. Marc said the GOS had similar concerns and was prepared to become more involved in commercial and civil society endeavors. Slovenia already has significant investments in telecom including the recent purchase of an internet provider. It has also bid on the renewed tender for the mobile telecom services network. Inter Europa, one of Slovenia's largest

logistics companies has opened a hub in Kosovo and Adria Airways plans to increase its direct flight service to Pristina. A recent program at Slovenia's Center for European Perspective with Kosovar civil servants was deemed a great success. Rucker also met with the Deputy Minister of Interior and Minister of Defense Erjavec when he was in town.

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Draskovic: Serbia follows Slovenia?  
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14. (C) FM Vuk Draskovic, perhaps the Serbian government's most frequent visitor to Ljubljana (this was his sixth visit), came this time with a delegation of farmers in tow. According to Marc, he was mounting a campaign (presumably in advance of January elections) using the slogan "Serbia follows Slovenia." (Note. Post has not been able to independently verify this piece of information, and Marc seemed a little incredulous himself when relaying this to poloff.) Draskovic and his delegation visited Slovenian farms and other agricultural sites to introduce his constituents to farming in the European Union. Draskovic gave the party line on Kosovo saying it had no grounds for independence, if it became independent, Serbia would grind to a halt. He also drew some comparisons with Taiwan - perhaps hinting at a "one Serbia" policy. Draskovic seemed still to be holding out hope for some sort of "compromise."

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Slovenia: Serbs Must Drop Romantic Attachment to Kosovo  
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15. (C) Marc said Slovenia had a different analysis (from Serbia) of the last 15 to 20 years of history in the region,

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and he thought that there was a large gap between politicians and the general population in Serbia on the question of Kosovo independence. He even went so far as to suggest a lot of Serbia's problems would be solved once it let go of this romantic attachment to Kosovo. Slovenia's historical sympathy for the plight of the Kosovo Albanians aside, Marc said Slovenia does not want to see Serbia entirely neglected, and in fact wants the international community to find concrete ways to ensure its integration into regional and European institutions. As for Draskovic's comments on compromise on Kosovo, Marc said he was not sure what was meant by that, but he suspected that some sort of real face saving measure was needed. He wondered if the USG would support PfP at this time, and what we might need to hear from the ICTY in order to overcome that particular hurdle on this issue.

16. (C) Comment: Driven as much by commercial interest as by political ideals, the GOS is keen to maintain a balance in its engagement with Serbia and Kosovo. Sometimes this results in fence sitting with the GOS touching its toe down on one side or the other depending on the influences prevailing in Ljubljana at the time. Old political ties and new commercial connections are forceful undercurrents in this balancing act and also have to square with Slovenia's obligations as an EU and NATO member. This desire also helps explain the occasional disparity in comments by Slovenia's foreign minister Dimitrij Rupel when he is speaking in Belgrade versus when he is speaking in Brussels. Slovenia is committed to doing its part to help secure peace, security and prosperity in Serbia and Kosovo. To that end, it has been putting the hard sell on for its Center for European Perspective in all its meetings with USG, Serbian, Kosovar and UNMIK officials. By all accounts, CEPs first two programs - with Montenegrin diplomats and Kosovar civil servants - were very successful, and we would be supportive of any future collaborations with this institution.

ROBERTSON